

Devasting floods in three states test our love for our "Wilful lavish land"

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As Australians, there is no place on earth that we would rather call "My Country" than this "Wilful lavish land"; although it does - as Dorothea Mackellar reminds us in her famous poem - hold both "beauty and terror" and throws out many challenges for its people.

It was only in the March 2009 ASCCA Newsletter that we were holding our collective breath for the plight of people living through those terrible 'Black Saturday' bushfires that raged through several states causing death and terrible destruction of lives and properties; particularly in Victoria.

ASCCA is able to offer practical help and advice to any of its clubs affected by the floods. The latest DonorTech Newsletter has details of a specially formulated Microsoft donations policy for organisations that have either been directly affected by the floods, or are working directly with flood-

affected individuals, families and communities. To find out more contact DonorTech or if you have computer access, go to: <http://www.donortec.org/donortec-supporting-queensland-flood-affected-organisations>

The strength of our ASCCA Organisation is the way all our member clubs 'network' and are connected by a sharing of interest in helping our fellow seniors to enjoy the benefits of computer learning and use in their lives. We share knowledge, ideas and important resources like learning materials and if any of our clubs need help; like a 'family' we want to be asked in case we are able to provide that help.

Nan Bosler has been in touch with many from flood affected areas and our thoughts, prayers and sympathies are with them as they grieve for the loss of life, the loss of property and the loss of precious memories.

Our Volunteers keep the world going round!

Congratulations to all our



Volunteers

On Australia Day the **Orange Senior Citizens Association** was named Orange Community Group of the Year as part of the Australia Day Celebrations. In accepting the Award the Treasurer, Ron Savage, praised the commitment of the President Shirley King and Vice-President Beryl Reedy.

This lively Club offers members a wide range of activities including computer, chess and art classes. Membership has increased an amazing 160 percent over the

past 12 months. Ron said, "one important thing about the club is that it helps people find companionship and ward off depression.

The computer classes which began last March have proved a great success and now beginner and advanced classes are offered to suit people of all capabilities and aged from 55 to 95. They have helped to get people out of their homes and communicating with family and friends.

[See more Awards on Page 5](#)

ASCCA NOTICE BOARD 2011

20– 27 March 2011 - NSW Seniors Week

Wednesday 23 March - ASCCA e Health Expo at 10.30 am, 280 Pitt Street Sydney. Guest Speakers, including our special Seniors Week Ambassador **Professor Michael Besser AM**, Clinical Associate Professor, Neurosurgery at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. The Professor is someone who leads by example in his belief that the key to a good long life is keeping both mind and body in peak condition. As consultant neurosurgeon at Sydney's RPA Hospital and the University of Sydney, he exercises his mind by volunteering within his field and immersing himself in his master's degree studies. As for his body; it is put through its paces training and taking part in triathlons and ironman events across the country at competition level.

Dr. Stuart Smith - Senior Research Officer, Neuroscience Research Australia. Stuart was a very popular presenter at the last ASCCA Conference and will tell us more about his research.

Mr. Peter Tomlinson - Anglican Retirement Villages Food & Linen Services Manager will entertain and inform us on the challenges of good taste and good nutrition in food preparation.

Tuesday 22 March & Thursday 24 March - Free 2 hour 'Learn how to ... workshops' will be available in the ASCCA Training Room. Bookings will open in March.

6-10 June 2011 - National Cyber Security Awareness Week

9 June - Members Forum, 280 Pitt Street, Sydney—details later

Tuesday 6th & Wednesday 7th September 2011 - 13th Annual Computer Conference for Seniors to be held at the Powerhouse Museum in Harris Street, Sydney.

17 November 2011 (to be confirmed) - ASCCA Annual General Meeting

Digital Switchover - Regional Victoria 5th May 2011

Why is Australia moving to Digital TV?



- * To keep up-to-date with world-wide changes in technology.
- * So we can access overseas programs recorded in the digital format only.
- * Australian TV shows recorded in the digital format can be easily exported overseas.
- * To free up space for more community services.
- * To deliver improved picture and sound quality and widescreen viewing.

Are you ready for digital TV?

Analog TV signals will be switched off for good across regional Victoria on 5 May 2011 as part of Australia's switchover to digital television.

This means that free to air TV channels from Prime, Southern Cross and WIN will be broadcast in digital only from that date, and you will need to be able to receive digital TV signals to keep watching your favourite TV programs on free to air television.

Many households have already switched to digital and can receive all of the digital channels provided by the ABC, SBS, and the commercial broadcasters.

There is government assistance available through the Household Assistance Scheme for people who receive the maximum rate of the Age Pension, Disability Support Pension, Carer Payment,

Department of Veterans' Affairs Service Pension or Income Support Supplement.

If you receive TV from a community-operated 'self help' analog TV transmitter which is not being upgraded to digital as part of the switchover, you may be eligible for help to convert to the new digital TV satellite service.

For more information on how to get ready for digital TV or to find out whether you are eligible for help, contact the Digital Switchover Liaison Officer in this area who can work with community groups and local organisations to prepare for the switch.

Digital Ready Information Line on 1800 20 10 13
or visit the web link <http://www.digitalready.gov.au/>

You are invited to attend ASCCA Seniors Week eHealth Expo

Our speakers have a wide knowledge of the ideals and current trends in health management and will help us explore the exciting potential of eHealth initiatives as a benefit to older Australians whatever their living arrangements. Come along and learn how you can be a part of the eHealth Revolution.

Information Stands and Light Lunch

Bookings now open, Phone 9286 3871 or Email office@ascca.org.au

ASCCA 's Report on the 2009-2010 auDA Grant Project

ASCCA has been, and will continue in 2011, to be involved in a number of projects aimed at achieving "Social Inclusion" for all; particularly seniors, isolated individuals, carers and people with disabilities.

Our networking with community organisations, government agencies and departments, industry, media and the general public, along with our representation on various enquiries and boards continues to be an important part of the work ASCCA does on behalf of its members. Our involvement with the National Broadband for Seniors Program, National E-Security Awareness Week Steering Group, the Digital Switchover Taskforce, the Federal Government's Standing Committee on Communications Enquiry into Cyber Crime and involvement with various telecommunication consumer groups has helped give our members a voice and raise awareness of the needs of seniors at a time when technology is changing and developing at an amazing speed. With the financial partnership of Microsoft we have also recently helped seniors seeking work to achieve and update computer skills through training programs.

Towards the end of 2009 the auDA Foundation made a generous grant for a project to investigate and document factors that inhibit or discourage isolated seniors and carers from exploring the internet. This was accomplished through the use of personal interview and group work while ASCCA sought ways to change attitudes and identify possible training options to help ensure social inclusion.

The project looked at seniors' beliefs about choice and how ideas relating to barriers, actual or perceived, may stop an individual from being able to consider using the net. Why do some isolated seniors reject an obvious option to lessen their isolation?

The findings and conclusions were probably

pretty much as most of us who are involved in teaching seniors would expect. They showed, among other things; there was clear mistrust about banking and giving personal details online and while people appeared to understand the need for eSecurity there was an alarming lack of knowledge about how to obtain this. There was also considerable frustration when they couldn't find the information they sought on websites. *(See article about websites that suit seniors on Page 4)*

With more and more government departments and agencies using their website as their main form for dissemination of information it is essential that websites that are slow to load, difficult to navigate and don't have the content being sought in a format that is obvious, are improved. Their target audience won't be able to use unwieldy websites. One particular government agency of great importance to seniors was singled out as being difficult to use.

Another obvious conclusion was that older Australians need to be able to access inexpensive training that is age appropriate. While we at ASCCA, and our clubs throughout Australia are doing a great deal in this area on a volunteer basis with some timely grants for a specific purchase or event from time to time - some core funding for such important education to help with "Social Inclusion" is the key to solving the problem.

Broadband for Seniors Kiosks have helped a great number of seniors over the three years of the program but there must be places for seniors to go to continue learning after the first basic instruction has been given at a kiosk. The program is currently due to finish on 30 June 2011 and while many ASCCA Clubs will be able to pick up and continue education for some of these people many will just slip back through those often mentioned "cracks" because of the lack of resources.

A word to those who may benefit from seniors using their website



No need to resort to "glitz" and gaming tactics!



A superior and well organised website works for everyone!



What is the purpose of a website? Surely it is to inform your target market and to encourage their use of your services or purchase of your product without annoying them. It should also give evidence that you are trustworthy and really exist and offer an obvious 'contact us' link to prove this.

We seniors could probably give many website builders a timely insight into what is useful to the website searcher and beneficial to the owner. There is a rather frustrating tendency evolving whereby eager young technical wizards determine to use all the potential of the much talked about high speed internet all the time!

Just as many of us who have embraced the technology are becoming comfortable planning our holidays or researching products on the internet, some geek "improves" the site and suddenly it flashes and spins, takes ages to load, uses a huge amount of download and leaves us feeling frustrated and uninformed. We don't want our websites to be like a computer game we just want a useful resource.

Recently a 70 year old couple planning a trip to France and Britain returned to a British website they had previously used and recommended to others - only to find it can no longer be searched for information through easy interactive maps set out in regions and areas with sub links to all the kinds of activities, sights or accommodation they may wish to browse. It has been "improved"!

Most travellers and particularly seniors do not approach their travel planning with a clear idea of what they intend to do and exactly where they intend to visit – they are usually open to the idea of "smelling the roses" along the way. In fact, when you don't move around as easily as before,

planning is part of the fun and good planning will ensure that the experience is both safe and enjoyable. When they first click on accommodation links on a website, travellers definitely do not want the inconvenience of filling out a form with dates and numbers of persons to share the room before they can begin – they are looking to browse and choose from a wide and tempting range of offers that are easily seen and navigated.

Perhaps these senior travellers are wondering; "Would it be better to return to the Cotswolds which we loved before, or should we look for another area to explore?" With an attractive and easy to navigate website these adventurous seniors may decide to do both, but not if they cannot work out how to use the "flashy" website – they might even give up and decide they are too old to travel and opt to stay at home instead.

It is not possible to complain about this "improved" website either - as nowhere could be found a physical address, phone number, or even an email address. Those of us who use our computers for this type of internet searching are generally reasonably cluey and cautious about eSecurity so we feel uncomfortable when the owner does not make himself or his organisation 'visible' to us.

This kind of "flashy", over the top, click-click website is not clever, it is the very thing that contributes to the much talked about "digital divide" and also must surely contribute to that lack of concentration and absorption often attributed to the young.

As it certainly doesn't appear to help the owners of the website achieve their goals either, it is hard to understand, the aim of this, or any organisation in making the change to an unworkable, uninformative, but "glitzy" website.

The frustration and feeling of



Congratulations to Jenny Watkinson from Hawkesbury Seniors Computer Group on her well deserved Volunteer of the Year Award—given by Peppercorn Services—Inc., a branch of Hawkesbury City Council.



Maureen McDonald felt proud to be just one of the 7,000 NSW volunteers who had been nominated for an award this year and said, "It became very evident that time contributed to society by them all keeps the world going round."

A word to those who may benefit from seniors using their website continued.

isolation was compounded for this couple when they decided to travel by train to the previously helpful travel office of this organisation in North Sydney; only to be confronted with a locked door and a sign that read; "This office is for staff and deliveries only – for any information on travel destinations visit our website www.###.com". There was not even a phone number shown on the sign and when our resourceful seniors rang the number they had copied from the phone book before leaving home, a message indicated the number is no longer valid. Further investigation later revealed the existence of another .org business address which listed the obsolete phone and address details and an email contact. The useless "glitzy" site is the "consumer" site for trip planning!

A 25 minute effort to unravel the secrets of using the British website used up 61 megabytes of the monthly download, while in contrast, a very helpful and much illustrated and useful French travel site only used 5.3 megabytes of download over an enjoyable period of two and a half hours of following interesting links. This session enthused and encouraged the prospective travellers and resulted in some definite plans being formulated. Although language was a bit of a hurdle, the French Travel office in Sydney was also able to hand out a selection of books and pamphlets to be enjoyed as further detailed planning is undertaken.

Where will all this take us if we have become so socially disconnected in just 15 years of Internet use?

Our Volunteers keep the world going round! - continued from Page 1

Congratulations to **Maureen McDonald** from **Computer Pals for Seniors - Epping Inc.** on her nomination and selection as the Sydney North Region Senior Volunteer of the Year in November 2010. Epping Club Members were proud and thrilled when their always cheerful and hardworking Membership Secretary, Tutor and Mentor for the Introduction to Computing Classes and Assistant Treasurer over the more than 10 years the club has been running was recognised for this work as well as for volunteer work with other community groups over many years. On being presented with her award, Maureen was at pains to remind us all that these awards give recognition to the work of all volunteers. We are happy for Maureen and proud that in her usual generous way, she accepted on behalf of all the Epping volunteers and acknowledged the outstanding contribution all volunteers make to the community.

Congratulations to the overall winner for **NSW Senior Volunteer for 2010** who is **Bill Phippen** who was recognised as the Sydney South West/Macarthur Senior Volunteer of the Year for his work with **Technical Aid for the Disabled**.

Congratulations to **U3A Nepean Blue Mountains Club President** and Italian tutor **Jim Tiberi**, who received an Australia Day Community Award from Penrith City Council. James is the Club President and a teacher in Italian language and computer classes at U3A His Award was for this and other initiatives to particularly promote Italian Culture for older people. The Scampagnata (Italian picnic) at Weir Reserve last year and the broadcasting of an Italian Hour on community radio **WOW FM** are two of Jim's recent inspirational volunteer programs.

How exciting for some of our wonderful volunteers to be recognised for their hard work.

Website www.ascca.org.au

Australian Seniors
Computer Clubs Association **ASCCA**

ABN 47 097 847 642

Working for Seniors

280 Pitt Street, Sydney NSW 2000

Phone 02 9286 3871 Fax 02 9286 3876

office@ascca.org.au

- General Information: office@ascca.org.au
- Member Support: cdo@ascca.org.au
- New Club Support: cdo@ascca.org.au
- Training: training@ascca.org.au
- President: ascca@ascca.org.au

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ASCCA Newsletter
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Pass on this issue of the ASCCA newsletter by printing copies for distribution, or make a list of all your club members with email addresses and forward it to them. It is of interest to each member of every club, not just Committee members.

The newsletter can also be read and/or downloaded from our website:- www.ascca.org.au You are welcome to copy items from this newsletter but acknowledgment of ASCCA is required.

Membership of ASCCA is open to all Seniors Computer Clubs, Organisations with a membership including Seniors, and those Organisations that recognise the value of computer technology for Seniors. Cost of ASCCA membership is \$110 per year, including GST. Corporate Membership also welcome.

If you fit one of those categories and are interested in joining ASCCA please go to our website www.ascca.org.au or email office@ascca.org.au

to find out how to start a club or read some of the advantages of joining ASCCA if you are an existing club.

An Application Form is available to download.

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Newsletter Editor:
Joan Craymer, Email:
thewhistlers@optusnet.com.au
Contributions are welcome.

Remember this is YOUR NEWSLETTER. Please take special note clubs outside Sydney and NSW. Please forward contributions by email to the editor.

Welcome to Tweed Area Computer Tuition Club

Our latest ASCCA Member Club is Tweed Area Computer Tuition at the South Tweed Sports Club on the far north coast of NSW – just five kilometres from the Queensland border.



With its idyllic location a short distance from the Queensland Gold Coast and Brisbane and its beautiful sub-tropical climate Tweed Heads is a perfect place to enjoy retirement. Holiday makers have long enjoyed the area, with delights like the nearby Terranora lakes area wetlands habitat and breeding area for many species of waterbirds and fish. There are many spectacular lookouts like the

one at Point Danger which is situated on the state border on a high peak overlooking the popular Duranbah Beach. At the lookout there is a memorial to Captain Cook who gave Point Danger its name.

The Computer Club has around 1,000 members and although most of the members are seniors others are able to join. It is located in Minjungbal Drive, South Tweed and has a comfortable air conditioned environment where the voluntary tutors enjoy passing on their computer knowledge using sixteen PCs and four Apple Mac Minis.

Assistance is offered to people wishing to obtain their first computer through helpful demonstrations using PCs, Macs and the free Linux (Ubuntu) operating system that includes a complete suite of installed programs. Courses catering for people from absolute beginners through to more advanced PC and Mac users with an interest in more advanced programs like Adobe Photoshop, are offered. Students are in fact encouraged to request information about their particular interests. People can join the Computer Tuition Club at any time but if they require more direct information there is a "sign on" day on the last Friday of the month at 1 pm.

We hope that your members will enjoy all the benefits of ASCCA Membership and we look forward to seeing some of you at our next ASCCA Conference in Sydney in September.